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ABSTRACT

From the narrow point of view, the use of schools is limited almost entirely to the academic learning of young people. School buildings are usually closed after the required work of youngsters and teachers is completed, and adults with educational needs do not have an opportunity to take classes or engage in other activities during the evening. This view assumes that the school's responsibility ends with the intellectual preparation of young people; there is little direct effort to join forces with the home or community. The "broad view" or "community" school involves people of all ages and circumstances and normally operates 14 to 16 hours each day, 6 days each week, all year long. The community school does not lessen the emphasis on academic learning for children; it simply operates over an extended period and does much more than provide good academic learning. The community school not only sends its staff into the home and community, but it involves adults from the community in the learning experiences of school children, and in the leadership of optional activities at the school. The reader must decide whether the narrow, traditional school or the broad, community school gives the greater promise. (Author/JG)

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Community Education

HOW SHALL OUR SCHOOLS BE USED -- TWO POINTS OF VIEW

As one travels about today and notices how schools are being used, two rather clear points of view are observed -- one a narrow and the other a broad point of view. Many schools are somewhere in between the narrow and broad points of view.

THE NARROW VIEW

From the narrow point of view the use of schools is limited almost entirely to the academic learning of children and youth. The buildings are opened at about 8:15 in the morning and are locked for the night at about 4 or 4:30 in the afternoon. Except for rare occasions they are closed on Saturday and during summer vacation weeks. Adults who have educational needs do not have an opportunity to take classes or engage in other activities during the evening. The buildings are opened on occasion during the evening for athletic, dramatic, or music events and about once a month for PTA meetings. Otherwise they are generally closed after the required work of the youngsters and teachers is completed.

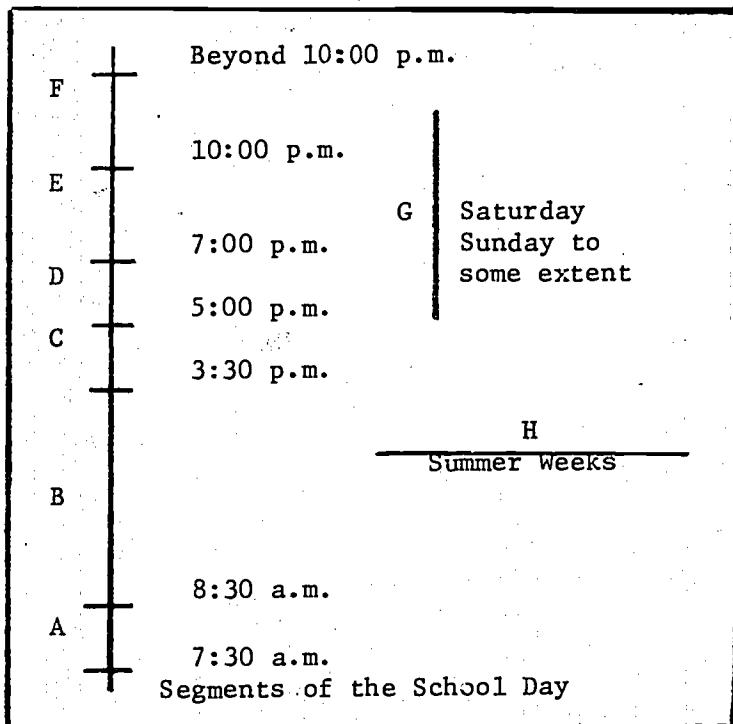
In the narrow view school no particular leadership is assumed by the school and its staff for community development. The curriculum is usually traditional, somewhat rigid, and depends almost exclusively on book-centered learning. The assumption is made that intellectualism is sufficient as a means of preparing young people to meet all human needs or at least the assumption is made that the school's responsibility ends with the intellectual preparation of the pupils. If they need other preparation and guidance for meeting human needs then it must be assumed that it is the job of the home, the church, and the community at large to supply such preparation. By and large the school handles its job alone and apart from the community and to a large extent apart from the home. There is very little direct effort to join forces with the home and the community in the child's development and preparation for life.

In the narrow view school the only school directed outlet for a child's natural curiosity and creativeness must be related to the formal school, subject matter program. The child's needs for free play and for free expression in fields of special interest is not generally fulfilled in the school itself.

Even though the view is narrow so far as extended use of facilities and "out of school hours" enrichment programs are concerned, the school may do a superior job in the area in which it functions. Children may perform excellently in reading and other academic subjects, there may be effective counseling and guidance services, health needs may be well cared for, and general moral and tone may be superior. However, the fact still remains that late afternoon, evening, Saturday and summer activities of the children and youth are not school related nor do out-of-school youth and adults have an opportunity to use school facilities and services for their educational, recreational, social and other needs. Hence we would do well to examine the broad view in determining whether or not the school is rendering maximum service to its people and to the solution of social and community problems by either the narrow view or by the broad view.

THE BROAD VIEW

The broadest view we could take requires that schools be open and staffed 24 hours a day, 6 days each week and for 52 weeks in the year. Normally schools that operate on a broad basis are open and staffed from 14 to 16 hours each of the six days in the week and each week in the year. Such schools are available for use by everyone in the community without regard for age, race, religion, or socio-economic circumstance. The school takes the lead in getting all people of the community to consider the school as a common meetinghouse and service center. The learning needs of older people are provided for quite as extensively as for children and youth.



When schools are used in the broad sense for learning experience by people of all ages the school day and year can be represented by a number of segments. (See Figure I) Only Segment "B" is required. This segment is primarily for children and youth for the study of required subjects. However, many adults use school facilities during this segment of the day for the pursuit of basic education courses, committee meetings, workshops and informal gatherings. Elementary school children on a voluntary basis engaged in many learning experiences during Segments "A", "C", "D", "G", and "H". Only occasionally are they involved after 7 o'clock

in the evening -- usually in some type of family event. The learning experiences in which the elementary children engage on a voluntary basis are academic, recreational, social, cultural, aesthetic, service, and creative in nature and also include the areas of health and safety. In addition to the segments indicated for children, youth and adults use Segment "E" extensively and Segments "B" and "F" to some extent. In other words older youth and adults have an opportunity to engage in certain learning experiences during any segment of the school day, week and year.

The curriculum of the broad view school is a continuum for old and young alike from early morning until late evening, throughout Saturday and summer weeks. Curriculum is looked upon as the means for bringing about change in people. Change may occur in many forms and areas and is not restricted as to time. Hence any activity conducted during any segment which brings about change in anyone is one element of the continuous curriculum.

From the broad view, all people who use the school facilities for learning purposes are members of the student body. Hence a 75 year old woman who studies ceramic art at 8 o'clock in the evening is a member of the student body of the school just as is her granddaughter who studies arithmetic at 10 o'clock in the morning. By this concept the total student body of the "broad based" school may be twice as large or more than twice as large as the number of children and youth who are required to go to school. During a certain year, in a midwestern city, the school enrollment of children and youth was 45,000. During the voluntary segments of the school day 90,000 children, youth, and adults used the school facilities in a single week.

The "broad view" school is generally referred to as the "community school" because it involves people of all ages and circumstances in the entire community. Henceforth I shall use community school to indicate the school that operates from the broad point of view.

The community school takes the lead in community development and in preparing people to solve community and social problems. The school staff goes out into the community to give leadership to the study and solution of social problems and the people of the community involve themselves in school programs that help to prepare them to meet social issues and solve social problems. They work together in committees on the approach to the solution of social problems, read helpful materials, listen to leaders speak, engage in workshops and participate in other types of background preparation for an attack on social problems.

The community school does not in any way deprecate the emphasis placed on academic learning of the children. Books and written materials are quite as important in the community school as in the narrow view school. The community school simply operates over an extended period of time and does much more than provide good academic book learning. The community school assumes that intellectualism is not enough in meeting all human needs, that other approaches are necessary. Much of what takes place during optional periods supplements and enriches the required work. For example, children who take reading for fun, choral singing, science workshop, arts and crafts, dramatics, or other subjects in the late afternoon, on Saturday or during the summer gain much to help them perform at a higher level in the same subjects in their required program.

All children and, to some extent, older people as well have need for recreational activities and an outlet for creative expression in many areas other than what is provided in the academic school program. The community school not only provides space for such activities but provides the leadership as well.

In order for an individual to become all that he is capable of becoming he must have maximum opportunity to develop the best possible self-image, life goals that are adequate, and personal characteristics of the highest order. The three factors most significant in the development of these attributes are the home, the school, and the community. In order to have the greatest impact on the development of the individual, the home, the school, and the community must be supportive of one another in terms of

the best interest of the individual. The community school not only sends its staff and leaders into the home and the community but it involves adults from the home and the community in the learning experience of the children and in leadership responsibility for activities during the optional portions of the school day, week, and year. In this relationship the home, school, and community form an effective team for the development of individuals as well as for the development of the community as a whole.

Many agencies in the community have educational purposes and are effective in the overall development of individuals and the community at large. In some situations such agencies operate alone and without organized relationship to the school or other agencies. The community school can take the lead in coordinating the work of various agencies and in relating agency programs to the school. If the school exercises appropriate leadership the school directed program and the agency programs will combine their efforts and effectiveness for the general development of individuals and the community.

The community school takes the lead in forming a coordinating council or committee which in turn can encourage all efforts of all agencies and organizations to serve the needs of people and the needs of the community in a combined way.

Many communities lack unity because of certain groups that keep themselves apart from the community as a whole. In some instances such groups actually resist community unification. The community school can take the lead in encouraging all fragmented groups to enter into some phase of the school program and to work toward building a genuine unified community. One approach to community unity is to bring into a working relationship the various sources and factors that can bring about community planning. Also some of the fragmented elements of the community may represent good resources for use in the community school program. The school can take the lead in relating the needs of people to the resources available in the community to serve these needs.

Comparative Summary

The Narrow View (The Traditional School)

1. School day -- 6 to 7 hours.
2. School week -- 5 days.
3. School year -- 39 to 40 weeks.
4. Student body -- children & youth.
5. Curriculum -- for children and youth only.

The Broad View (The Community School)

1. School day - 14 plus hours.
2. School week -- 6 (plus) days.
3. School year -- 52 weeks.
4. Student body -- children, youth and adults.
5. Curriculum -- a continuum for children, youth and adults.

6. Little participation of parents and lay people in the learning experience of the child.
7. Outlet for creative expression related primarily to intellectual pursuits.
8. Use of community resources limited to the academic program.
9. Health learning and service related only to academic required program.
10. Limited opportunity for recreational and social activities.
11. Enrichment experience limited to what can be worked into the required class hours.
12. Child's personal and creative interests not broadly explored.
13. Limited opportunity for members of a family to participate together.
14. School generally closed to community groups needing a meeting place.
15. Authority for education rests largely in the hands of professionals.
16. Leadership development limited to children and youth in relation to the academic.
17. People without children in school not closely related.
18. Limited communication with the community as a whole.
19. Professional staff related only to the academic work of children and youth.
20. School facilities and equipment restricted largely to single purpose of serving children and youth.
6. Extensive participation of parents and lay people in the learning experience of the child.
7. Outlet for creative expression broadened into optional portions of the school day, week and year.
8. Community resources used on broad basis in optional periods as well as required periods of the school day.
9. Health learning and service exist on broad time schedule, during optional as well as required programs.
10. Broad opportunity for recreational and social activities.
11. Enrichment experience takes place on a broad school day extending into out-of-class periods.
12. Child's personal and creative interests widely explored and broad outlet possible on optional basis.
13. Broad opportunity for all members of the family to participate together.
14. School always open to community groups for meetings and programs of all types.
15. Schools returned to the people who own them.
16. Developing leadership on the part of all citizens one of the leading goals.
17. People without children in school actively involved.
18. Broad communication with the community at large.
19. Professional staff provided for long day, week and year leadership, and widely involved in community as a whole.
20. School facilities and equipment adapted to multiple use by all people in the community.

- 21. Limited effort to strengthen family life other than through the academic.
- 21. Broad program of strengthening family unity through broad participation of all members of the family.
- 22. Children and youth not directly involved in programs for community improvement.
- 22. Children and youth as well as adults involved broadly in community improvement projects.
- 23. Limited action as a referral agent.
- 23. School takes the lead as a referral agent on problems not specifically school related.
- 24. Impact on the solution of social problems largely through the academic required program.
- 24. Much direct attack on the solution of social problems.
- 25. Racial integration is influenced only by interrelationship of children and their teachers.
- 25. Many direct efforts at integration of people of all ages and socioeconomic circumstances are made through a variety of programs and activities.
- 26. Does not presume to initiate projects for community development.
- 26. The school initiates many projects for community development and improvement.
- 27. Learning experience is largely academically centered.
- 27. Learning experience comes from attempting to fulfill the unmet needs of people.

Which View Represents the Real Power of Education

The narrow view (traditional school) has much power in the development of society. If it were possible to raise the intellectual level of all people to a high state we would be free from many of our social ills. However, many people do not respond to the intellectual approach to self improvement. Many such people do have intellectual curiosity about many things and have a great deal of innate creativeness. When opportunities are provided for full expression of such curiosity and creativeness in ways other than purely academic much growth takes place.

The reader should decide which view -- the narrow or traditional view, or the broad or community school view -- gives the greater promise in areas such as the following:

- 1. Building attitudes that will help to overcome such barriers to social progress as bigotry, prejudice, selfishness, indifference, intolerance, inertia, ignorance and lack of understanding.
- 2. Developing good mental and physical health through broad opportunity for creative expression and successful experience.

3. Making impact on the solution of such social problems as delinquency, school dropouts, poverty, and racial segregation.
4. Helping people understand the purposes of education and gaining their support.
5. Bringing about integrated effort for the solution of community problems and the fulfillment of common goals.
6. Helping people overcome their inertia and begin doing things for themselves.
7. Causing people to understand that they own their schools and therefore have the right and the obligation to have a voice in how the schools shall be used.
8. Developing community leaders who in turn can contribute to community development.
9. Helping people solve their economic problems through programs of retraining, turning a hobby into an income producing enterprise, getting and holding a job, maintaining property efficiently and economically, gaining insight into how to purchase, prepare, and conserve food and clothing, and how to make wise investments.
10. Making use of the educational efforts of other agencies in the community.
11. Reducing illiteracy on the part of all in the area of the academic, social, cultural, and economic.
12. Conditioning young people for efficient and productive adult life.
13. Building unity between the home, the school and the community.
14. Conditioning people for effective living in all of the communities of which they are a part: local, regional, state, national, and world.